FOLLOW-UP REPORT
Department of Public Safety
Police Operations – District Patrol Audit
September 2017

Office of the Auditor
Audit Services Division
City and County of Denver

Timothy M. O’Brien, CPA
Denver Auditor
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Audit report year: 2016
September 7, 2017

Stephanie O’Malley, Executive Director
Department of Public Safety
City and County of Denver

Re: Audit Follow-Up Report

Dear Ms. O’Malley:

In keeping with generally accepted government auditing standards and the Audit Services Division’s policy, as authorized by D.R.M.C. § 20-276, our Division has a responsibility to monitor and follow-up on audit recommendations to ensure that audit findings are being addressed through appropriate corrective action and to aid us in planning future audits.

This report is to inform you that we have completed our follow-up effort for the Police Operations – District Patrol audit issued January 21, 2016. Our review determined that the Department of Public Safety has not adequately implemented any of the recommendations made in the audit report. Despite the Department’s efforts, auditors determined that the risk associated with the audit team’s initial findings has not been fully mitigated. As a result, the Division may revisit these risk areas in future audits to ensure that appropriate corrective action is taken.

For your reference, this report includes a highlights page that provides background and summary information on the original audit and the completed follow-up effort. Following the highlights page is a detailed implementation status update for each recommendation. Although we did not update the status of recommendations that the Department of Public Safety disagreed with, these recommendations are included in the status update section as a reference.

This concludes audit follow-up work related to this audit. I would like to express our sincere appreciation to you and to Department of Public Safety personnel who assisted us throughout the audit and follow-up process. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at 720-913-5000 or Katja Freeman, Audit Manager, at 720-913-5158.

Denver Auditor’s Office

Timothy M. O’Brien, CPA
Auditor
Police Operations –
District Patrol
September 2017

Status
The Department of Public Safety has not implemented the recommendations made in the January 2016 audit report.

Background
DPD operates under a community-oriented policing philosophy, which encourages police departments to work collaboratively with communities they serve to address issues of concern, such as crime. DPD has established various goals for officers, which include spending 35 percent of available time conducting self-initiated—or Class 2—actions. DPD has a Biased-Policing Policy that discourages practices of singling-out or treating individuals differently on the basis of various characteristics or traits.

Purpose
The objective of the audit was to examine and review DPD’s policies and practices related to self-initiated actions to determine whether DPD is effective, consistent, and equitable when applying these police tactics. We also reviewed the Department’s community policing efforts, including strategies and policies for initial implementation and roll-out of a department-wide body worn camera program.

Highlights from Original Audit
The Denver Police Department (DPD) has adopted a community-oriented policing philosophy, which is widely regarded among law enforcement professionals and researchers as an effective method of deterring crime and reducing fear. Police departments, through community policing tactics, seek to build trust and mutual respect between police and the communities they serve. However, we found that DPD does not have sufficient data to determine whether its community policing efforts are effective and equitable.

Effectiveness—DPD began incorporating community-oriented policing tactics into its operations in the 1980s and has steadily increased its efforts over time. Today, the department has a Community Relations Division, Community Resource Officers, and participates in youth outreach programs. Further, DPD has instituted team policing and redistricting to better carry out community policing activities. However, DPD does not have a comprehensive approach or mechanism by which to measure the effectiveness of these efforts.

To support state and local law enforcement agencies that are dedicated to the community policing philosophy, the Office of Community Oriented Policing Service (COPS Office) created the Community Policing Self-Assessment Tool (CP-SAT) to help state and local law enforcement agencies with informing strategic planning, identifying training needs, promoting community policing initiatives to the public, and enhancing overall community policing efforts.

Equitability—DPD officers do not always capture demographic data when carrying out self-initiated—or Class 2—actions, unless the contact leads to a citation, arrest, or street check. Without capturing demographic data for all pedestrian and traffic stops, DPD cannot determine if or to what extent Class 2 actions are conducted fairly and effectively, and specifically, if officers are in compliance with the department's Biased-Policing Policy.

Other Pertinent Information—DPD is implementing the use of body worn cameras (BWCs) into its policing strategy. Some studies show that BWCs reduce officer uses-of-force and citizen complaints against officers. In December 2014, DPD concluded a pilot BWC project that was carried out in DPD District 6 to test the use of BWCs on a small scale. The City entered into a five-year contract with Taser International for $6 million to provide BWC equipment and data storage. DPD’s draft BWC policy establishes a retention schedule for recordings captured through BWCs.

Findings at Follow-up
The audit report made three recommendations, and DPD agreed to implement one of them; DPD disagreed with the other two. DPD did not implement the one recommendation with which it had agreed.

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## Recommendations: Status of Implementation

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<th>Recommendation</th>
<th>Auditee Action</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>FINDING:</strong> Limited Data Impacts the Denver Police Department’s Ability to Determine whether Community Policing Activities Are Effective and Equitable</td>
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<td><strong>1.1</strong> Community Policing Self-Assessment Tool (CP-SAT) – DPD should reach out to COPS to explore options on how to utilize CP-SAT or a similar tool. The results of the assessment should be used to inform strategic planning, identify training needs, promote DPD’s community policing initiatives to the public, and enhance overall community policing efforts.</td>
<td>DPD did not move forward with the CP-SAT survey, even though the CP-SAT Administration Team advised that DPD could be a participant without receiving a Community Hiring Program grant, which is usually a prerequisite for participation. DPD stated that they had instead conducted other surveys to get input from staff. Specifically, in February 2016, DPD personnel responded to the Citywide Employee Engagement Survey, which was initiated by the Mayor’s Office. In addition, the Denver Police Foundation conducted an independent community survey through Ciruli Associates, a local polling and consulting firm. When auditors asked for a copy of these survey results, we received a blank survey template of the Employee Engagement Survey; we also received no information regarding the Ciruli Associates survey, which the Denver Police Protective Association (police union) keeps for internal purposes. Therefore, we cannot assess whether either survey met the spirit of or captured content similar to the CP-SAT survey. As a result, we consider this recommendation as having not been implemented.</td>
<td>Not Implemented</td>
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<td>Original target date for completion: April 2016</td>
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**Recommendations: Status of Implementation**

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<td>1.2 Biased-Policing Policy – DPD should update its Biased-Policing Policy to include at least an annual assessment of the demographic data collected (as suggested in recommendation 1.3) in order to inform Command about compliance with policy.</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
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<td>1.3 Demographic Data Collection – DPD should require officers to collect demographic data, at minimum, for all pedestrian and traffic self-initiated contact (Class 2 actions). DPD’s Data Analysis Unit should analyze the data to ensure that officers conduct self-initiated actions in compliance with the department’s Biased-Policing Policy, and if necessary determine why discrepancies exist. We have provided a list of variables officers should collect at minimum for each contact:</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
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<tr>
<td>i. Date/time/location (both district and precinct)</td>
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<td>ii. Length of contact</td>
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<td>iii. Date of Birth</td>
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<td>iv. Gender</td>
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<td>v. Race/ethnicity</td>
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<td>vi. Reason for contact</td>
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<td>vii. Action taken/outcome</td>
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<td>viii. Officer ID/badge number</td>
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Conclusion

The Department of Public Safety has not implemented any of the recommendations made in the Police Operations – District Patrol audit report. Accordingly, we determined that the risk associated with the audit team’s initial findings has not been mitigated.

During our audit follow-up work, we learned that DPD has initiated other efforts in response to one audit recommendation that DPD initially rejected. Specifically, DPD has communicated with stakeholders, such as community leaders, about ways to obtain personal information from residents when interacting with the police. DPD does not currently have a plan in place for implementing any changes or to begin collecting personal data from individuals during interactions with police officers.

On behalf of the citizens of the City and County of Denver, we thank staff and leadership from the Department of Public Safety for their cooperation during our follow-up effort and their dedicated public service.